

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT EG
SUBJECT: TALK WITH SADAT RE DELIBERALIZATION

REF: CAIRO 14818

1. WHEN MEETING WITH SADAT JUNE 24 IN ALEXANDRIA, I TOOK THE OCCASION TO SAY A BRIEF WORD TO HIM AGAIN ABOUT THE CONCERN OF MANY OF HIS AMERICAN FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS ABOUT THE GOE DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN. I RECALLED HIS EARLIER STATEMENT TO ME THAT HE INTENDS TOCONSOLIDATE DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT AND SAID THAT I HAD HOPED HIS SPEECH TO THE EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASU ON JUNE 21 WOULD INCLUDE SOMETHING WHICH WOULD ALLAY THE CONCERNS OF HIS FRIENDS ABROAD. WHILE SADAT MUST BE THE BEST JUDGE OF WHAT TO DO, I WAS WORRIED THAT HIS IMAGE IS BEING HURT. ADMITTEDLY, MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE REACTED NEGATIVELY TO RECENT GOE ACTIONS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE POLITICAL REALITIES OF EGYPT, BUT THIS CANNOT ALTER THE FACT THAT THEY ARE CONFUSED, PUZZLED AND THEREFORE CRITICAL OF RECENT ACTIONS. I REMARKED THAT IT IS MUCH EASIER FOR A REPUTATION TO BE TORN DOWN THAN TO BE BUILT. THE HIGH REPUTATION THAT SADAT HAS DEVELOPED AMONG THE AMERICAN CONGRESS AND PUBLIC HAD BEEN DUE LARGELY TO HIS PERSONAL

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EFFORTS AND THAT REPUTATION SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PRESERVED. IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PRESIDENT CARTER IN THE LATTER'S EFFORTS TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE FRONT.

2. SADAT TOOK MY COMMENTS IN A POSITIVE SPIRIT. HE SAID THAT HE IS AWARE OF OUR CONCERNS, SINCE PRESIDENT

CARTER HAD SPOKEN TO BOTH GENERAL GAMASY AND SAYID MAREI ABOUT THE MATTER. BOTH HAD REPORTED THEIR TALKS TO SADAT. HE REITERATED THAT HE INTENDS IN HIS JULY 22 SPEECH TO "FIRMLY ANCHOR" DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT AND THAT WE NEED NOT BE CONCERNED. WE WOULD SEE BEFORE LONG WHAT HE HAS IN MIND.

3. COMMENT: SADAT IS CLEARLY GETTING THE SIGNALS ABOUT OUR CONCERN. IT IS WORTH BEARING IN MIND THAT DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT IS A RELATIVE THING AND WILL DOUBTLESS REMAIN SO FOR WHAT SAYID MAREI LIKES TO CALL A "TRANSITIONAL" PERIOD. WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT SADAT HAS IN MIND. THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF RUMORS ABOUT WHAT THE "SURPRISE" WILL BE, INCLUDING PARDONING THE FEW REMAINING POLITICAL PRISONERS, DECLARING ILLEGAL THE WAFD PARTY'S DISSOLUTION OF ITSELF, ANOTHER PARTY TO BE FORMED, ETC., BUT NO HARD FACTS. EVEN MUBARAK CLAIMS NOT TO KNOW WHAT SADAT HAS IN MIND, ALTHOUGH HE IS PROBABLY SIMPLY KEEPING MUM. IF SADAT RUNS TRUE TO FORM, HE IS PROBABLY PREPARING ANOTHER WHAT HE LIKES TO CALL "BOMBSHELL", THIS TIME FOR THE DOMESTIC SCENE. EILTS

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